

based on 19 interviews in the Sydney metropolitan area, enables us to listen to the voice of 'Millar', an amalgam of the case studies, where her understandings as a computer teacher of each of the cases have been consolidated into a composite, non-gender specific account. The paper raises issues about the placing of oneself in unknown territory and about how new learning efforts open opportunities for pleasure and pain, and in doing so, Helen affords us insights from a qualitative perspective into the complex and dynamic nature of older adults learning how to use a computer. In the second paper in this section, **Karen Milheim** discusses the wide variety of characteristics of 'non-traditional' students returning to study within higher education programs. She contends that these characteristics are different from those of 'traditional' students, and discusses, for example, personal life barriers, financial responsibilities and different learning styles. The paper suggests a number of ways in which educational institutions can respond in their attempts to meet these different needs and to make the learning experience a positive one for the adult student.

The 44th Annual Conference of Adult Learning Australia in Adelaide last November, entitled *Bridging Cultures*, was a very successful event. Particularly stimulating were the five keynote addresses around the conference general theme, each of whom from their different perspective and in their own distinctive ways brought new ideas and in particular reinforced the significance of values in the enterprise of adult education. There were also 35 workshop sessions that focused around the sub-themes of cross-cultural communication, Indigenous learning, workplace cultures and intergenerational learning. These papers may be found on the ALA website.

Happy reading!

Roger Harris
Editor

Interrogating our practices of integrating spirituality into workplace education

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Workplace education's interest in spirituality is examined, with an emphasis placed on why this interest might be increasing and what challenges it presents. This article interrogates commonplace strategies to integrate spirituality in workplace education, – providing holistic education, creating sacred spaces and mentoring – questions each approach and suggests ways that they might be integrated in an authentic manner into the workplace. The authors then examine how educators might interrogate their teaching practices by inquiring into their own motivations, ethics and values. An attempt is made to stem the flood of spirituality in workplace education by asking: For what purpose is spirituality being promoted in this workplace? And in whose interests?

Introduction

The growing number of works on the spirituality of learning in the workplace (e.g. Briskin 1998, Ealy 2002, Guillory 1997, Mitroff & Denton 1999, Pierce 2000, Secretan 1996) is obvious to anyone who spends time in bookshops, libraries or even on the web. Although there is quite a variety in the texts that are available, there is a common tendency for them to offer uncritiqued spiritual strategies and practices without regard for the integrity of the organisation, the workers and the concept of spirituality itself. This article is an attempt to offer critical comments and questions about these strategies and practices.

We are three researchers and teachers in higher education who have an interest in how spirituality gets appropriated in workplace education. Personally, we hold spiritual and religious commitments though our concentration here is on spirituality which we see as a search for meaning, value and purpose that brings us closer to others and to God. Professionally, we have experience in a variety of workplaces and a particular commitment to authentic teaching and learning processes in these workplaces. In this article, we draw on the published research, including our own, and also on our experience in higher education and other organisational settings (see English, Fenwick & Parsons 2003).

We explore first how spirituality can be operationalised or practised in the workplace, then move to a discussion of the theory and the conceptual frameworks for a spirituality of work. We suggest how spirituality can be interwoven authentically with educational practice in the workplace, as well as acknowledge the tensions and dilemmas of promoting spirituality as part of teaching. Our central question is: How can our theories-in-use be interrogated and continuously monitored so the 'spirit' of spirituality is respected?

Linking spirituality and work

There is growing interest in spirituality at work in many organisational settings where educators practise, such as colleges and universities, health care and social services, business and industry, and not-for-profit agencies. According to popular management theory, business is becoming reinvented as a "community of souls" through shared values, love, trust and respect. In the past decade, bestselling business titles have included *Complete idiot's guide to spirituality in the workplace* (Ealy 2002), *Handbook of workplace spirituality and organizational performance* (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz 2003) and *The stirring of soul in the workplace* (Briskin 1998). A common argument in these texts is that productivity can be enhanced if a spiritual "sanctuary" is created within the workplace. And, of course, there is a simultaneous growth in "merchant-missionaries who are busy marketing spirituality-based worker development programs to corporations" (Fenwick & Lange 1998: 69).

From the organisation's point of view, a sense of spirituality in the workplace can produce employees who (a) are less fearful of their organisations, (b) are far less likely to compromise their basic beliefs and values in the workplace, (c) perceive their organisation as significantly more profitable, and (d) report that they can bring significantly more of their complete selves to work, specifically their creativity and intelligence (Mitroff & Denton 1999: xiv). McMillen (1993) explains that putting resources into spirituality can produce more fully developed workers, highly attuned to their identity, strengths and weaknesses. Spiritual employees bring more energy, effort and clarity to their jobs. Thus, issues of initiative, responsibility, motivation, commitment and productivity resolve themselves. And, of course, as McMillen points out, health insurance costs, absenteeism and enthusiasm are all affected positively.

Why has a controversial topic like spirituality emerged from the corporate closet? Imel (1998) identifies a number of reasons for the

growing focus on spirituality. She points out that downsizing and layoffs in the workplace have created a culture where workers are questioning the value of work and seeking meaning and spirituality. When workers are under-valued by the organisation to which they were loyal, questions about significance and the need for personal support increases. Another reason, according to Imel, is the ageing of the workforce. The sixties' generation, the Baby Boomers, are now pursuing personal questions about life's meaning and spirituality, and negotiating mid- to late-career stages, which are typified by increased reflection on the purpose of their work in the big picture.

Imel (1998) also points to the decline in traditional networks of support, such as the family, which forces people to question the location of meaning, hope and inspiration for what they will do in this world, and how they will make their living. Finally, according to Imel, changes in organisational structure have created a workplace with less structure and more people-orientation. These open-format organisations, sometimes characterised by fewer boundaries between managers and workers, tend to promote closer working relationships among employees. The quality of talk changes as people become closer and they become more intimate in sharing personally held beliefs such as spirituality.

This interest in spirituality appears also to be related to higher stress, general malaise and what Dirkx (2000) argues to be a "crisis of meaning" in the contemporary workplace. Dirkx explains that, fundamentally, adults seek identity and purpose in work, or a spiritual centre. This purpose is echoed in the writings of Fox (1994) who argues that work is an expression of our deepest being and is an innate need of all human beings. From this worldview, which is shared by many writers on workplace spirituality (e.g. Vaill 1998), our purpose is to move toward a vision of education within the workplace that is humane and that acknowledges both the relational dimension and the power dynamics of all workplace learning. This

vision of generative work, although perhaps seen rarely, is not new. It has been offered by many writers concerned about how workers are affected by the naturalising of productivity and efficiency, the division of labour, multi-tasking and the hyperspeed of technological change. For instance, feminist work theorist Mechthild Hart (1992) suggests a vision of "sustenance work" whose ultimate purpose is to maintain and improve life, not produce commodities. These perspectives are consistent with a spiritual perspective of work.

This authentic vision of education within the workplace moves toward the inclusion of human values, respect for people, and the integration and recognition of spirituality, without subjugating these to the material gain of the organisation and its elite. This is what former Czechoslovakian president Vaclav Havel (1994) calls the transcendental anchor. Havel's vision is consistent with our own views about the possibilities for spirituality in workplace education. This is the standard against which we measure all workplace education initiatives. This vision rails against any notion of a 'spiritual curriculum' in the workplace, and against any attempts by the workplace educator to develop others' spirituality. Instead, this vision favours encouraging those educators interested in spirituality to pursue their own spiritual quest, to seek coherence between their spiritual insights and their daily living, and to embed their work with responsible spiritual practice. We hold that educators can do much to suffuse the spaces and communities around them with invitation, compassion and care – and a sense of anchor beyond productivity and material gain.

Yet, what is concerning is an apparent seamless conflation of corporate purpose with the discourse and promises of spirituality. When people are encouraged to abandon rationality and open themselves to spiritual ways of knowing, their human vulnerability is open to manipulation. 'Spiritual' educators may unwittingly become soul harvesters serving the organisation's bottom line. Many are

themselves competitive businesses seeking a novel market niche, and they are apparently finding it as hawkers of the holy to corporate interest. One rather uncomfortable example is illustrated by Pacific Institute's "Purpose of Life" curriculum, offered to its Fortune 500 company clients by educators such as Roman Catholic priest Father Bob Spitzer (Finlayson 1997). This curriculum focuses on developing spiritual ethics and 'happiness' among workers, "the happiness we feel from making a difference to someone or something beyond [ourselves]" (p. H4). Father Bob demonstrates how such happiness increases productivity, markets, return on investment and long-term viability.

Work choices that are, at bottom, moral/ethical decisions are increasingly seen as technical decisions to increase productivity. When a 'do more and faster' mentality predominates, both workers and management can become blind to how so many everyday work decisions in their workplaces are really ethical decisions that attend relational learning – choices of the spiritual realm. For example, think of how often workers are faced with choosing actions that will protect their job but hurt a friend or contravene an ethical principle they value. Then think of how many people claim that the work they used to love – their vocations – have become stress-filled, devoid of creative expression, compromised in ethical integrity, and burdensome with paperwork and administrivia that seem constantly to get in the way of meaningful action. Think of processing e-mail, which for many office workers swallows more and more numbing chunks of time. And, how does email reshape the personality of an interaction, of a relationship? How can one connect meaningfully with people through a medium that expects efficient, concise immediacy but distances people from each other? Our preoccupation with productivity overloads our days with tasks crowded into breathless timelines, leaving little time to connect with people through meaningful talk, to connect with our activities and environments through mindful engagement, or to connect with our

own feelings, meanings and bodies through reflection. Why do more and faster? What is truly being accomplished? These are questions of the spirit.

Bringing spirituality into our teaching

As adult educators and trainers, the first ethical question we must ask is whether it is even ethical to discuss spirituality in the workplace or to combine spirituality with workplace education. In the words of management writer Nadesan (1999): Should the corporation save your soul? Is it ethical to debate an issue that is so personal? These questions are the first many ask when starting to explore the place of spirituality in education and training.

Lawler's (2000) recent examination of the ethical dimensions of continuing professional education, for instance, raises specific issues for adult educators and trainers who plan educational programs for professionals within a structured organisation. When introducing spirituality into education, there is always a potential problem when the organisation's vision (e.g. religious orientation, focus on servant leadership, exclusivity, lack of tolerance for difference) conflicts with the educator's vision of what is ethical and right. The educator must decide whether the right course of action is to challenge organisational leaders, refuse to be part of the proposed plan to implement the vision, leave the organisation, or even act as whistleblower. Most adult educators and trainers encounter ethical dilemmas that affect how they carry out programs and plans. However, when it comes to spirituality the issues are amplified because the topic is personal and difficult to separate from other individually held views. Therefore, it is imperative that adult educators and trainers seriously consider these questions in light of their own selves: What are our assumptions? What do we believe about spirituality? Where are potential conflicts for us? How can we prepare ourselves to negotiate the conflict?

Holistic Practice

Against this backdrop, we move now to examine the idea of a holistic perspective in our educational practice, seemingly a cornerstone idea in spirituality. By holistic, we mean both educators and learners are more than the sum of their physical, emotional, social or cognitive parts. New Zealand-based educator Heron (1999) explains that holistic education incorporates the spiritual and is an integral part of how we educate. For him, every aspect of life is spiritual, and spirituality is always life. Holistic learning or, as Heron (1999) calls it, “whole person” (p.1) learning, engages the person as a “spiritually, energetically and physically endowed being encompassing feeling and emotion, intuition and imaging, reflection and discrimination, intention and action” (p.1). Whole person learning assumes that adult educators and trainers are also involved in whole person living, or that they cultivate lifestyle practices that support their whole person. One of the often neglected aspects of living holistically is spirituality. Although this holistic perspective sounds positive, we want to ask the critical question: Can we teach holistically and not invade the personal/ professional boundaries that come into play in a workplace environment? At the point where these boundaries are blurred, we may have gone too far in our spirituality endeavours.

The belief that educators should incorporate a spiritual and holistic perspective into their teaching is not new. Some other names that describe the link between spirituality and adult education or training include “renewal of personal energy” (Hunt 1992), “holistic learning” (Boud & Miller 1996) and “aesthetic education” (Harris 1987). Even Dewey (1959) used the term “experiential education” in what we believe is a spiritual way. For Dewey, the insights gained from experience itself actually “en-spirited” and guided every aspect of living – making education itself a political act focused on the democracy of humanity.

Holistic education practices involve learners, teachers and the learning environment itself. A key proponent of holistic teaching and learning, MacKeracher (1996), in her book, *Making sense of adult learning*, turns attention to all the ways that adults need to facilitate learning. She focuses on the emotional, cognitive, social, physical, spiritual aspects of the learner in her discussion of how to facilitate adult learning. MacKeracher sees learning as a kaleidoscope where “the characteristic shape and color of the separate pieces matters much less than the combinations created as colours and shapes mingle” (p.243). She advocates using metaphors, recording dreams and writing journal entries as ways to help educators and learners increase their self-understanding and self-knowledge. Again, we challenge educators to ask the question: Do these personal approaches such as dream analysis contribute to the workers’ well-being or are they a way of allowing the organisation to seize control of the workers’ personal growth for work purposes? At every juncture the educator needs to ask: In whose interests and for what purpose am I using this strategy? Is my purpose justifiable?

A holistic approach sees the spiritual health and well-being of the learner and the educator as important to education. Holistic perspectives embrace multiple views of educational practice and a breadth of educational dimensions. They view the practice of personal spiritual exercises as intricately related to the everyday practice of education. Yet, we challenge the holistic perspective that the division between personal and professional is artificial (MacKeracher 1996), insofar as it makes normative incursions into the personal life of a worker for workplace gain. Below we look more closely at specific ways that educators can be more holistic in their teaching.

Cultivating learning environments as sacred spaces

One specific way advocated for integrating spirituality is to cultivate learning environments as sacred spaces (see especially Tisdell 2003). As educators and trainers, we have a special role to play in

the cultivation of a truly sacred or spiritual learning environment. This process involves many things, but one of the most important is examining what we mean – and what others have meant – by the word ‘spirit’. Whether it is called *spiritus* in Latin, *pneuma* in Greek, *ruach* in Hebrew, or *ch’i* in Chinese (Whitehead & Whitehead 1994), the notion of spirit implicitly carries with it the idea that spirit is something we cannot live without. Our spirit fills our being, and is all of us. It is our life, our sustenance.

Our spirit is a place where the sacred part of us may live – in fact, must live. We must create a space for the spiritual. The theme of sacred spaces is hardly new. It has been taken up by a variety of writers, including Heron (1998), who suggests that any understanding of the sacred must promote the connection with a “sacred space.” A sacred space is much more than a geographical entity. Sacred space is created not so much with things as with attitudes and dispositions. A space can never be embodied with a sacred nature until it is inhabited with particular thoughts, people and care.

A sacred space is an area conceptually sanctified or separated from the everyday world, often for the purpose of worship. Obviously, as Davidson (1988) says, all religions have sacred spaces – holy places of communication between humans, gods, spirits and the forces of nature. The importance of the place as sacred is also underscored in writing on spirituality and adult education or training. For instance, Vogel (2000) refers to the importance of place, a holy ground, on which any educator walks in the presence of others, that respects those others. The questions we ask here are: Are we as educators mindful and aware of the power we exercise as a teacher or a leader in this situation? Are we careful not to turn the workplace into a place of worship or to overstep our roles as educators with the learners? Do we maintain our professionalism? Do we respect the boundaries between the personal and the professional that is respectful to workers as learners?

Sacred space, according to Vella (2000), consists of several elements, the first of which is *dialogue*. Vella says that “the heart of a spirited epistemology is respect for dialogue” (p.11). She holds that sincerity about engaging in dialogue means that the teacher is not an expert on everything. However, Vella does not mean the teacher is vacuous, rather that educational experiences are designed in ways that listen to adult learners’ experience and knowledge base and build on what is known to help understand what is new.

Second, Vella suggests that a strong sense of *respect* for learners is important when creating sacred space. Respect needs to be both part of the design phase of adult education and training, and part of the interactions between teacher and student. Respect means, first and foremost, asking about learners’ needs and really **listening** to the answers, and being present to them. Gabriel Marcel (1949), twentieth century French philosopher, describes presence as “something which reveals itself in a look, a smile, an intonation or a handshake” (pp.25–26). Our respect for our learners is conveyed in our tone and the ways we speak to them. Respect is also embodied in how we handle conflict. As in any human-to-human contact, negotiating differences respectfully is one of the greatest challenges of being an educator or trainer.

Vella suggests that *accountability* is a third way to convey respect. The teacher is accountable to the learner for the ‘design’ of the educational experience. Therefore, designing education experiences is an act of reverence with the learner foremost in the educator’s mind. The educator and the learner are in “a dynamic reciprocal unity” (p.14). This accountability precludes sloppiness and inadequate planning, and ensures that everyone does his or her best work. Vella’s wisdom is obvious. It simply makes sense to us as adult educators that the triumvirate of respect, dialogue and accountability will effectively help adult educators create sacred spaces in the learning environment. Our questions here are: If you cannot be accountable,

should you consider incorporating spirituality into your work? Can you be accountable to the learners and effect a “dynamic, reciprocal unity” if the learners are not equal partners in the planning and designing?

Mentoring as Spiritual Learning Activity

Since Roche’s (1979) seminal study of executives on Wall Street, the use of mentors as a way informally to educate employees has gained a foothold in the business world. The use of mentoring for on-the-job or informal learning has personal ramifications and for this reason we discuss it here as a strategy for informal workplace education. Promoting mentoring is a specific way to improve the spiritual dimension of adult education and training. Most recently, Darwin (2000) has argued that mentoring is a mixed blessing in the workplace. She also suggests that using mentoring as a strategy needs further critique and careful consideration. It ought to be about relationship, support and increasing the human spirit. We take seriously Fenwick and Lange’s (1998) critique that spirituality cannot be marketed; it is not about the bottom line. Mentoring, Zachary (2000) says, is a highly-developed concept and practice. Daloz’s (1999) work on mentoring as an approach to teaching and learning has helped bring a fresh perspective to mentoring. He sees mentoring as reciprocal, with the potential to nurture self, others and the work world. Yet, Daloz is not unaware of the dangers of arranging mentoring relationships or mandating them. Mentoring is not a hierarchical supervisory relationship. It is a reciprocal and dialogical approach to working and learning. Mentors offer care, concern, resources and outreach – helping people reach out to others. We suggest that all educators who use mentoring as a form or workplace learning ask the critical questions: Is mentoring done to increase both the personal and professional goals of the worker or is it only intended to increase the bottom line? Does mentorship assume traditional hierarchical and patriarchal forms (see Stalker 1994) or the reciprocal, mutual self-giving forms of learning in relationship?

Adult educators need to practise honouring and respecting learners by using gentle speech, giving helpful and honest critique of the learner’s work, being present and available to learners, and preparing carefully and thoroughly for learning activities. These actions convey respect and honour for the relationship. Mentoring can be a means of revitalizing teaching and of promoting a continuous learning culture (Cohen & Galbraith 1995, Schulz 1995). Mentorship can foster more collaborative communities in education and the workplace that respect new people, new ideas and new skills while honouring traditions and collective knowledge. At this point, we must ask if there are serious inquiries and concerns about the possibility for abuse of power, and for the control of mentees (Darwin 2000). These possibilities undergird the need for a more spiritual approach to mentoring, one that allows for difference in work styles, values and communication styles, and needs and wants.

Asking critical questions of our own teaching

The most straightforward way to promote a spiritual dimension in teaching and learning is to make a deliberate attempt to think and act ethically. Almost every daily decision in the learning environment has an ethical component. Teachers can also raise deliberate and provocative questions that spark conversation and evoke comments from learners.

These common activities are the heart of ethical teaching because they are based on those choices and decisions fundamental to teaching and learning. These ethical choices centre on decisions about the boundaries that constitute pedagogical relationships, about the nature of the spirit within the exercise of teaching, and about the real reason spirituality is being incorporated. These activities necessarily include thoughtful decision-making and making sure that decisions are weighed against how they help the environment, the people in the corporation and the learners. Ethical choices implicitly include a basic

recognition of the person as spiritual. This means making ethical choices throughout the whole business of education, including choices about how we educate learners and choices about how we involve learners in decisions.

All spiritual traditions are concerned with questions of morality. What actions are moral – what actions are right or wrong, good or bad – both in terms of intent and their implications? Western traditions seem more concerned with intent; Eastern traditions include a consideration of the responsibility for the impact of an action that transcends questions of what an individual hoped to do. And, questions of morally good action – combining the ethic of care, the ethic of justice and the ethic of critique (Merriam & Caffarella 1999) – link personal decisions about the different ways to act with the groundings of one's spiritual belief. Few spiritual traditions would not seek a consistency between belief and behaviour.

Morality is always linked to one's understanding of the nature of the spirit and the spiritual universe, the meaning of life, the purpose of the spiritual journey and the 'right response' to spiritual pursuits. There are key distinctions between the ethical systems of different spiritual traditions. A key question for adult educators and trainers centres on how these different frameworks, based on these ethical systems, can be useful. A specific question is how to deal with pluralistic moral stances in making ethical choices in a diverse community of learners. We ask educators: How often do you take time critically to reflect on your own practice? How often do you examine the ethical dimensions of your decision-making?

Questioning purpose, values and congruence

Asking or raising questions is one of the simplest yet most effective teaching strategies, used since the creation of teaching. To a considerable extent, these questions have become their own personal art form of teaching and learning. The point of raising powerful

questions is not necessarily to find a specific answer, but to learn to dwell in the questions until, as Rilke (1984) suggests, you live yourself into the answers.

Yet, not all questioning or reflective practice is necessarily spiritual; indeed, there are many orientations to reflective practice (see Wellington & Austin 1996). We are mindful that it is possible to be a reflective practitioner, as we are advocating here, without engaging spiritual, moral and ethical questions. The mode of reflective practice that we follow is similar to Hunt's (1998), which does indeed engage these questions and which has a spiritual basis.

Questioning is often a way of challenging ourselves. "Spiritworks" writer Judy Neal (2000) has suggested some questions that she uses to uncover the spiritual in work, especially her online conversations. These questions are: What role, if any, has spirituality played in the career choices you have made? How did you come to be interested in integrating spirituality and work? Tell me about a particularly satisfying or meaningful time when you were able to practise one or more of your principles, values or beliefs at work? Tell me about a time when you had difficulty integrating your spirituality and your work? What are the costs and benefits to you of focusing more on spirituality in your workplace?

Assessing the spiritual dimensions of your teaching

Adult educators who really care will likely evaluate their practice rigorously, especially those who take seriously the ethical mandate of incorporating spirituality into their work. We offer a list of questions that an adult educator or trainer might ask in evaluating whether he or she was effective. Our list is adapted from a list compiled in 1991 by Rolph:

- Do I encourage a questioning attitude towards the self? Does my teaching challenge the learners to ask questions of ultimate

meaning, such as: Who am I? How do I relate to others? Does my practice help learners interpret purpose and meaning for their lives?

- Does my teaching encourage the development of a sense of worth and a respect for the human dignity of others?
- In my teaching, do I encourage the use of the imagination? Do I provide periods for reflection and inner exploration?
- Does my teaching encourage learners to look beyond the ordinary to the transcendent?
- In my teaching do I integrate religion, literature, poetry, art and music, and help students search for the meaning and value that they contain?
- Do I encourage learners to identify and own their particular faith stance?
- Do I give learners breathing room and space to create their own meanings from the learning experience?
- Do I provide opportunities for learners to share what they are thinking and feeling, including their negative thoughts?
- Do I practise being caring and concerned for learners?

Summary

In this article we have explored some ways that adult educators and trainers can examine closely their efforts to bring spirituality to their teaching. Ultimately, we want to promote authentic and holistic learning in our educational work, learning that incorporates the thinking, willing and feeling capacities in all of us.

We believe there are three ethical and defensible approaches to promoting spirituality in work. First is acknowledging, developing and expressing one's own spirituality as an inherent part of one's practice as a workplace educator. Second is ensuring that the environment of one's practice as an educator is both congruent with one's spiritual values, and invites others, where appropriate, to express and explore their own integration of spirituality and work.

Third and perhaps most important is continual questioning of one's intentions and actions when invoking the spiritual in workplace education. We must ask: For what purpose is spirituality being promoted in this workplace? and In whose interests? We maintain that the only defensible purpose is dedicated to creating a more compassionate life-giving workspace, and is concerned with enabling people to find fulfillment and personal meaning in their work, one which nurtures connectedness and caring.

How, in fact, workplace educators can address spirituality in their work is a question that obviously challenges us for an answer. We have argued here that the best approach for educators concerned about spirituality is to attend to their own spiritual development, and the integration of their spirituality into the way they live their own practice. This approach has worked for us in our own practice in higher education. Integration does not necessarily require incorporating explicit discussion of spirituality into one's conversations and educational materials, although for some like Neal (1997) it might. For others, it is more a matter of living one's spiritual beliefs, whatever they may be. Many of the spiritual authors appear to share beliefs in connectedness and compassion for people, reverence for all living things and the potential sacredness of each task and moment in one's work life.

This article has also shown the potential for manipulation when presenting spiritual programs in the workplace. Even when these are aimed at improving workers' morale and well-being, many tend to target employees as requiring 'fixing' through spiritual development. Not only does this render systemic problems to be the responsibility of individual workers, but it subjugates individual spirituality under the authority of the employer – who wields the enormous power of a pay cheque. But rather than ban spirituality from organisations, we have suggested that tolerance and understanding, and even careful encouragement, of individual spiritual expression in work might be

an acceptable approach. However, when doing so, we must be highly sensitive to the development of any dominant norms which can impose subtle forms of exclusion or discrimination. Ethical issues surrounding spirituality and workplace education deserve to be pondered at length, especially given the implications for the quality of the work environment and the needs of the worker. Perhaps the most important spiritual task facing educators involves clear-eyed discernment of their own and their organisation's intentions for the role of spirituality in workplace education.

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~~Epistemological agency and the new employee~~

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~~The necessary learning actions new employees must undertake to meet the performance requirements of their new job may be said to constitute a constructivist epistemology of necessity. This view forms a useful basis of inquiry into new employee workplace learning as it seeks to explicate the significance of what new employees 'do' in and through their learning. This paper briefly outlines the rationale and findings of one such inquiry. It proposes that what new employees 'do' may be best conceptualised as exercising their epistemological agency. An interpretive analysis of this 'doing', through a framework that identified the mediating factors of new employee learning, characterises the new employee learner as a manager of their personal workplace learning agenda. It gives new emphasis to the role of the individual in the social construction of knowledge. Such an understanding of the new employee learner suggests possibilities for enhancing a sociocultural constructivist view of learning that seeks to account for the personal purpose and consequence of learning.~~
